Generally lifting of sugar by the State Government is to the full extent of allotment.

(b) and (c) Offtake of foodgrains from the PDS is dependent on the difference between the open market prices and the PDS end retail prices. Under the Targeted Public Distribution System the Central Issue Prices for the quota of foodgrains for families living below poverty line has been kept at a low level which ensures higher offtake.

Offtake of edible oil under PDS depends upon the availability of edible oils in the open market and the prices thereof. However, with a view to improve offtake of edible under PDS the Government had last reduced the Central Issue Price by about 33% with effect from 27.2.99.

The State Governments have been advised to follow the following schedule for uplifting the PDS Kerosene.

60% by 10th of the month.

25% during the next week, and

balance 15% during the following week.

Import of rice

167. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether rice import by private traders into the country are on the rise;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) its impact on the P.D.S.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Available official data upto October, 1999 does not indicate any increase in rice imports by private traders.

However, the data from the trade sources indicate that the imports are showing a rising trend.

(b) Rising trend in imports may be on account of competitive prices for imported rice available to the trade.

(c) The reported quantities of import so far are not large enough to have any impact on the Public Distribution System (PDS). However, offtake for the category of consumers above poverty line would be adversely affected if the landed cost is comparable to the prices payable by that category of consumers under PDS.

Uniform sugarcane price policy

168. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the State-advised prices which the sugar industry is being forced to pay is taking this industry constantly towards sickness;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to adopt a uniform all-India sugarcane price policy; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) the prices of sugarcane advised by the State Government *i.e.* the State Advised Prices have no statutory action behind them. The Central Government fixes the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane under the provisions of the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966. The higher state advised prices of sugarcane increase the cost of production of sugar which affects the profitability of the sugar mills.

(b) and (c) The Central Government fixes the uniform Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane linked to a basic recovery percentage (currently of 8.5%) subject to a specified premium for